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## CONFESSIONS OF A SAFE PERSON.

It is a generally received opinion that the greater part of the minor miseries of human life usually arise, either nearly or remotely, from our own faults, follies, or misdemeanours. Now, without having any intention of attempting to controvert this impression as a general rule, I cannot help thinking that it admits of many and great qualifications in its various bearings. I know not how it may fare with others, but I think I may venture to affirm, on my own behalf, that all my delinquencies put together have not entailed upon me so plentiful a harvest of bitter fruit as the possession of one inconvenient characteristic that may almost be regarded as a virtue—namely, that of being a *thoroughly safe person*.

How this peculiarity of temperament evinces itself I am rather at a loss to describe: I fancy, however, that it must lie rather conspicuously on the surface, or I should not so frequently have to lament its possession.

If this very inconvenient endowment were known only to the friends of my youth, or even those of long-standing, who had watched the gradual growth of my character and mind, it would be of little consequence, but it appears equally obvious to the casual acquaintance of yesterday; and no individual of them all, as it seems to me, ever becomes the recipient of a disagreeable of any kind, but he or she hastens without remorse to deposit the unwelcome burden upon me, as though I were a feminine Atlas of old, strong enough to bear the woes of the world, instead of a fragile widow lady, needing support for myself. Perhaps it may be that, as I am well known to have graduated in the school of sorrow without having made any violent demands on the sympathy of others, I may be supposed to possess some unknown and specific consolation which might be equally efficacious with all who have sufficient confidence to seek it at my hands. Whether I am quite correct in this surmise I know not; but I do know that it is very disheartening to one willing to bear unshrinkingly her own share of the cares of humanity, to be called upon to sustain all the troubles, real and imaginary, of a rather extensive circle of acquaintance.

Thus it is, however; and so numerous have my clients of this kind become, that I could divide them into almost as many classes as those of the Swedish naturalist himself. For the present I pass entirely over claimants for consolation under those real evils of life in which we are in a manner bound to sympathise with each other. To bear each other's burdens is a great duty, and I trust I am not unwilling to take my share in exemplifying it. But what I do deprecate and protest against is the wearisome detail of those

mean and petty cares which people too often create for themselves, and which to them

'Make up in number what they want in weight.'

My claimants for consolation under this head are, I regret to say, neither few nor unimportant; nay, many of them are accustomed, as a matter of course, on the occurrence of the slightest untoward event, to bring their budget of grievances and unlade them at my door. It is vain to look, if not to say, that nothing of the kind is wanted; they persist in unpacking and spreading out their wares before me, obtruding them for inspection *en gros et en detail*, until finding escape impossible, I proceed to examine as the best means of getting rid of them. I separate the real from the imaginary, and finally suggest such expedients and alleviations as may occur to me at the time. Having done all this, I naturally congratulate myself on my approaching release from their importunities; but the result too often proves my joy to have been premature. These dealers in distress are by no means disposed to part with their stock in trade without some better equivalent than an exhortation to patience, or an assurance that others are as highly taxed and as heavily laden as themselves.

Another variety of my visitants are in the habit of endowing me with a vast amount of important secrets, which I neither desire nor deserve; but escape is of no easy attainment, for in all probability I meet them the next day in the public thoroughfare as facts well known to every one but myself. I am entirely at a loss to understand how such important nothings could have transpired, until I recollect that some persons covet secrets as a spendthrift does money—for the express purpose of circulation.

But it is time to descend from generalities to particulars. One old friend of mine fulfils for me the office of a legal almanac, acquainting me, by the length and frequency of his visits, when term-time commences and terminates. He has for some years been in the habit of requiring me to accompany him through all the windings of an intricate and protracted Chancery suit; from the first 'cruel injustice' which necessitated the litigation through the first filing of the bill, the cross-bill by which it was met, the answer, the interlocutory hearing, reference to the Master, judgment, appeal, and *da capo* before the lord chancellor—not a single phase of its tediousness will he abate me. He even offered to send me the pleadings home, to satisfy me of the justice of his claim—a fact which I had never for one moment doubted. I did not, however, avail myself of his offer, particularly as I had travelled over the ground again and again; nay, arrived, as I flattered myself, within

sight of the decision—extinction, I was going to say; but who ever witnessed the actual death of a sult in Chancery? No; it is the very phoenix of litigation, and in its apparent demise leaves behind it the elements of a new and more vigorous successor to supply its place—

'E'en in its ashes live its wonted fires.'

Such being the case, should the antiquated cause in question ever give up the ghost, I should speedily be called upon to sympathise in another troubled joy of the same nature; my worthy friend being of a constitution that is never quite at ease except when under the influence of a blister of one description or another.

Another old friend, of ancient lineage and somewhat Puritanical views, took advantage of a morning-call to pour into my sympathising ear his fears that his eldest son Augustus must have been getting over head-and-ears in debt, for he had, by mistake, opened a letter from which the word *junior* had been inadvertently omitted, which proved to be a bill for cigars of L.13, 3s. 6d.; and as vexations never come singly, another letter had arrived by the same post to himself, from the young gentleman's tailor, enclosing a little account of L.48, 17s. 10d., and soliciting his intervention with a view to its early settlement, having a large remittance to make up, &c. As the anxious father made this communication, he drew forth the missive in question, as though ill-news ever needed confirmation, or I were a person to require vouchers! I can truly say that I fully shared in the vexation of my friend, for the young man had always been rather a favourite of my own. I had often thought how much credit he reflected on his tailor, and was therefore proportionably disappointed to learn that the 'credit' appeared rather to lie on the other side. However, I fully concurred in the propriety of a strong remonstrance being despatched forthwith; to do which, before he cooled, my old friend shortly retired to his study, leaving his wife and myself to talk the matter over, and consult on the best means of arresting the evil. After a sufficient time had been devoted to lamentations, &c. I ventured to suggest that the strong remonstrance should be followed, at a convenient distance, by a cheque; hinting that I had known a free pardon of a first offence very effective in preventing the recurrence of a second—nipping, in fact, the evil in the bud.

No sooner had we settled this difficulty—so far as agreement on our own parts could do so—than the good lady hastened to inform me that she was not without her own peculiar trial as it regarded her youngest son Horace (whom she was educating at home under her own eye), although she had not at present communicated the circumstance to his father. Though I am by no means an advocate, in general, for conjugal concealments, I thought in the present case a degree of reserve might be commendable, even before I was aware that the cause for anxiety arose from no more important fact than that she had, on several occasions, latterly, detected the young gentleman in the perusal of the 'Adventures of Robinson Crusoe,' on church festivals, although she had expressly provided the 'Life of Henry Milner,' by Mrs Sherwood, for such recreation! At this announcement she looked steadily into my face for some answering sign of surprise and sympathy. But as the offence in question did not appear to me to be of so very deep a dye, I thought myself justified in reminding her, in extenuation of the delinquency of my young friend, that the obnoxious work was by no means an objectionable one, in time and place, and that it might have been a much worse book that had seduced the lad from his duty. To this suggestion she returned rather

a reluctant assent, but was evidently too little informed of the mental food most attractive to boys of twelve years old to derive all the consolation which this view of the subject was calculated to present.

In common honesty, I must admit that all the confidences by which I am honoured are not of so serious a class as those above mentioned. For instance, love-affairs, to which I am far less averse, are on the whole very endurable; for though they may be rather voluminous, there is something not actually disagreeable in finding yourself the depository of hopes bright as sunshine and transparent as truth itself: I must own, however, I like the revelations to be direct and from the principals in the affair, and utterly repudiate all second-hand communications. It is true I have often to bear witness to the verity of Shakspeare's opinion about 'true love never,' &c.; but then, as Juliet says, 'Tis such sweet sorrow,' that I can hardly help prophesying smooth things, and cherishing the hope that all will come right in the end. And then how pleasant is it to hear that the hero or heroine, as the case may be, 'always admired us so much as a Safe Person,' and 'had so high an opinion of our influence and powers of persuasion.' One young gentleman, in the fervour of his gratitude for a successful negotiation with a rather refractory grandmother, went so far as to say, that he thought, 'when I was young!' I must have borne a striking likeness to dear Gertrude in person and character. Was not this ample reward for the sour looks and short answers that I had encountered on his behalf? I must, however, admit that one or two of my confidences of this description have not been without their cares and anxieties. One desperate case, I remember, caused me two or three sleepless nights, for the parties seemed rather too familiar with the exact point at which England ends and Scotland begins; and even the lady dropped some hints that the penalty of exclusion from Her Majesty's drawing-room might be endured. I confess I did not like all this; but happily papa's blessing and the bishop's licence relieved me of all trouble in the event. I cannot deny that I have witnessed the death as well as the birth of more than one eternal attachment; but such events have not shaken my faith in constancy, or led me to concur with Dr Johnson in his opinion, that marriages would be as happy if made by the lord chancellor.

I do not profess to be equally tolerant of the communications from the heads of houses; such persons being usually less ethereal in their requirements, and by no means equally refined in their general views. One lady, the wife of a military man, for instance, walked two miles to inform me that she fully believed her daughter Georgiana would sacrifice herself to young Sylvester, who had not 'joined' more than a twelvemonth, and who did not possess a guinea to buy himself up; and she fully believed the silly girl was even prepared for his sake to 'throw over' their old friend Colonel Cannon, who was about to retire on full-pay, with the 'good-service pension' in prospect. I certainly did not much wonder that Ensign Lackland, with his handsome face and gallant bearing, should present greater attractions to the eyes of nineteen than the gallant colonel, with double the amount of years and of wisdom; but the idea of 'throwing over' a gentleman of such weight and magnitude presented so ludicrous an image to my mind, that I could not resist a smile, which, unfortunately, did not pass unnoticed, and being misinterpreted, was resented accordingly. I was reminded that, however improbable such events might appear to some persons, more unlikely unions were of frequent occurrence; and she had reason for believing that the colonel only awaited a little encouragement to declare his sentiments. In confirmation of this view she instanced the fact that, at the commandant's ball only a week before, he had been heard

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to remark that 'Georgiana was almost as pretty as her mother had been at her age;' which led some persons to think that old wounds might be scarred over. However that might be, she had determined to probe the affair as regarded Mr Sylvester to the bottom. As she was so determined, I had no alternative but to defer at once to her superior judgment and experience. I had, besides, a special repugnance to any conversation reminding me of surgical operations, ever since I had accompanied the said Georgiana to have a tooth extracted; to spare the poor girl a lecture from mamma, by the way, on the ease with which such operations were performed in the present day, and the courage which she herself had always manifested on similar occasions.

Of the general history of servants, as well as of their individual errors and omissions, I think I may venture to say that I am an animated encyclopædia, although I made for a long time a steady and vigorous resistance; but what can a single defender do against a host of assailants? I was obliged finally to capitulate, and abandon my position with as good a grace as possible.

The venerable Archdeacon Paley, if I mistake not, observes in one of his admirable works, 'that the general lot of humanity, however dark it may appear, will on examination be usually found to contain its own peculiar compensations.' And I have learned to be of the same opinion; for no sooner did I look this infliction steadily in the face than I discerned many alleviations in its unpromising physiognomy that had not presented themselves before, in the opportunities it afforded me of offering suggestions of a palliative character for those who are seldom permitted an opportunity of saying much for themselves.

My general acquaintance with human nature has led me to believe that a certain peculiarity of temperament is very likely to be accompanied by a certain style of error and misdemeanour; hence when any general complaints are made of the shortcomings of Jane or Susan, I have only to put a few leading queries, with the view of ascertaining to which class—the sanguine or lymphatic—the offender belongs, and I am forthwith prepared to offer some suggestions of a consolatory character. If, for instance, the delinquent be of the sanguine temperament—rather given to short answers to her lady and long questions to the policeman; though I am fully prepared to believe that she may be a little too coquettish in her attire as well as in her temper; rather addicted to followers perhaps; with a certain familiarity of smile when she is pleased, and toss of the head, by way of defiance, when she is affronted; still, in such cases I have usually found it safe to suggest how swift-footed she is in general—how ready and intelligent on emergencies—how willing, with a little bribe of praise, to take upon herself duties not exactly her own—with a concluding remark on the credit a house derives from having a trim damsel to open the door in the absence of the footman.

If, on the contrary, the subject be of the lymphatic class—given to late hours in the morning and drowsiness throughout the day—such unpromising representations by no means discourage me; for even inertness may have its compensation. In such cases your correspondence is pretty sure of remaining intact; china and glass pass scathless through her hands; and thus, as Dr Kitchener profoundly remarks, 'fragile wares may be made to last as long as iron.' The baker seldom receives encouragement to linger long with his basket; she does not seek to rival her young lady by clumsy imitations of her Parisian bonnet or Polish Kesiewick; nor is she apt to strike your piano dumb in your absence by any practisings of her own.

Now, although these qualities are of rather a negative character, they are very important in their way, and I have seldom found my observations without effect. Once, indeed, I confess myself to have been completely

at fault; for the delinquent brought to the bar of justice was said to unite in her own proper person all the faults common to both classes. In vain I taxed both memory and imagination to meet the exigencies of the case, but without effect. At length, wearied of the subject, I proceeded to dismiss it by what I thought an unanswerable proposition—namely, 'that we must not expect perfection for twelve pounds a year;' but my antagonist was 'too cunning at fence' for me, and even foiled me with my own weapons, by triumphantly exclaiming: 'True, my dear; but I give guineas!' I need hardly say that after this I never attempted to lead a forlorn-hope again.

Though the history I have given, for obvious reasons, can hardly be considered a complete specimen of the confidences with which I am honoured, as regards the more exclusive class of my visitors, it may perhaps be received as a sample of the more general and commonplace description of revelations that come before me.

'Give sorrow words,' said the poet who best knew human nature in all its phases. To thousands of persons verbal sympathy does seem to possess an incalculable charm; and although we may question the intensity of the grief that can be so easily medicined, it is equally certain that that is trouble which is felt as such, whether it be the loss of a kingdom or the loss of a pencil-case.

I once inquired of a friend who was habitually reserved what could have induced her to make a confidante of myself in a matter of some delicacy: she was silent for a moment, as though revolving the subject in her mind, and then replied that she thought it arose from the entire absence of curiosity on my own part—a sort of indifference, not to say repugnance, to the gossip of common life, which she found irresistibly attractive of confidence. How far this solution of the matter may be generally correct I know not, but with it I must be satisfied *faute d'une meilleure*. One consolation, however, I think I may now take to myself—that having by these revelations fairly forfeited all claim to be any longer regarded as a *safe person*, I may now hope to remain unburdened with more than my own proper share of disquietude for the rest of my life.

#### THE BATHURST DIGGINGS.

THE discovery of gold in the Bathurst District in New South Wales has taken the world by surprise—a new California in one of our own colonies! The whole of Australia, however, has long been known to be particularly rich in metallic minerals. Copper is begun to be wrought in various places with a success that has already made several fortunes; lead has also been discovered; and an iron mine was recently opened in the neighbourhood of Berrima, where an abundant supply of ore is found almost on the surface, said to yield 65 to 70 per cent. of metal of the finest quality. Coal is found in abundance. In short, skill, capital, and hands are alone required to excavate immense mineral riches; and that these requisites will in due time be provided, nobody can entertain any doubt. In the language of the day, there is a 'great future' for Australia; and that not only on account of what is beneath, but what is on the surface of the ground. Its wool is destined to be the main resource of one of our most important manufactures, if it is not so already.

In certain papers relative to crown-lands, presented to parliament at the opening of the session of 1851, there is a dispatch from the governor of New South Wales to the secretary for the colonies, in which it is stated that gold had been found in various parts not only of this colony but in that of Port Philip. The



following passages occur in this dispatch:—'In some parts of the colony I am informed that auriferous ores have been discovered. A specimen, weighing about three ounces and a half, was lately exhibited to me. I have not been able to learn the precise locality where it was found, except that it is on the western side of the great dividing-range in Sydney or Middle District. An extensive gold-field is also said to have been recently discovered at the Pyrenees, in the Port-Philip District; but I have been unable as yet to obtain any authentic information on the subject.' Here the statement is explicit. Gold had been found on the western side of the great range of mountains that separate the inner country from the extreme belt of land on which Sydney is situated. This exactly agrees with Bathurst, which is a high-lying district beyond the mountains, in a direction almost due west from Sydney. It is evident, therefore, that the lately-arrived account of gold-finding is no new thing to the home government. From the nature and extent of the investigations now going on in Australia, it is indeed pretty evident that we shall soon hear of other important discoveries which have assumed a practical shape. Although prepared by a previous knowledge of the fact, that gold existed in the Bathurst Plains, the governor of New South Wales appears to have been startled, as everybody else has been, with the intelligence that diggings had actually commenced, and were successfully carried on. It is somewhat remarkable, in this as in most other instances of the kind, that the full discovery was not made by pioneers of science, specially employed for the purpose, but by persons moving in the rank of shepherds or commercial adventurers. It is mentioned that an old Scotch shepherd had for some time known of the Bathurst gold, and secretly profited by it. Probably this very sly individual had not any adequate idea of the extent of the deposits, and merely pocketed some stray morsels of the precious metal. The discoverer, so far as general publicity was concerned, is a Mr Hargraves, who had been in California, and was led to conjecture the presence of gold from the similarity of the rocks. These rocks, we believe, are chiefly quartz—a hard, brittle material, of which the white candy-stone of Scotch rivers presents an example. It requires to be understood that gold is not found in the character of a sulphate—that is, mixed with a stony and gaseous substance, which must be expelled by smelting, as in the case of lead, copper, and most other metals. It may be said to come pure and ductile from the hand of nature. When found, therefore, it requires only to be mechanically separated from the rocks or rubbish in which it is embedded. Usually, it is in the form of grains and small lumps, varying from the size of a pea to that of a walnut, carried down by streams, and rolling amidst sand and gravel: these particles, large and small, are best secured by washing with water—the loose and lighter materials being floated off, and the gold afterwards picked out from the heavier substances that sink to the bottom of the vessel. Gold-finding is, in truth, fully as much a matter of jumbling and washing as it is of digging; and as these jumbings take place in the beds of rivers, it will easily be imagined how severe and hazardous is the labour.

The gold-diggings of Bathurst became generally known in the colony about the beginning of May; and no sooner did the news spread than a kind of madness seized on the community. In the town of Bathurst, as we learn from the following local account, the excitement was extreme:—'People of all trades, callings, and pursuits were quickly transformed into miners;

and many a hand which had been trained to kid-gloves, or accustomed to wield nothing heavier than the gray goose-quill, became nervous to clutch the pick and crowbar, or "rock the cradle" at our infant mines. The blacksmiths of the town could not turn off the picks fast enough, and the manufacture of cradles was the second-briskest business of the place. A few left town on Monday equipped for the diggings; but on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday the roads to Summer Hill Creek became literally alive with new-made miners from every quarter; some armed with picks, others shouldering crowbars or shovels, and not a few strung round with wash-hand basins, tin-pots, and culenders. Garden and agricultural implements of every variety either hung from the saddle-bow or dangled about the persons of the pilgrims to Ophir. Now and then a respectable tradesman, who had just left his bench or counter, would heave into sight with a huge something in front of his horse, which he called a cradle, and with which he was about to rock himself into fortune. Scores have rushed from their homes provided with a blanket, a "damper," and a pick or grubbing-hoe, full of hopes that one or two days' labour will fill their pockets with the precious metal; and we have heard of a great number who have started without any provision but a blanket and some rude implement to dig with. Such is the intensity of the excitement, that people appear almost regardless of their present comfort, and think of nothing but gold.'

This authority goes on to say, that 'what assisted very materially to fan the excitement into a flame was the arrival of a son of Mr Neal, the brewer, with a piece of pure metal weighing eleven ounces, which was purchased by Mr Austin for £30, who started to Sydney by the following day's mail with the gold and the news. Since that an old man arrived in town with several pieces in mass, weighing in all from two to three pounds. He also started for Sydney with his prize. Mr Kennedy, the manager of the Bathurst branch of the Union Bank of Australia, visited the diggings on Saturday last in company with Messrs Hawkins and Green. Each of these gentlemen picked up a small piece of the pure metal; and a few handfuls of the loose earth from the bed of the creek, which were brought home by Mr Kennedy, and from motives of curiosity have since been assayed by Mr Corfe from Sydney, and a piece of gold extracted therefrom of the size of a small pea. On Wednesday morning last Mr Hargraves accompanied Mr Stutchbury, the government geologist, to the diggings, and with his own hands washed a pan of earth in his presence, from which twenty grains of fine gold were produced. He afterwards washed several buckets of earth and produced gold therefrom. Mr Stutchbury hereupon expressed his satisfaction, and immediately furnished him with credentials, which have since been forwarded to government. The fact of the existence of gold is therefore clearly established; and whatever credit or emolument may arise therefrom, Mr Hargraves is certainly the individual to whom it properly belongs. We have very much more to say, but we have not space to say it in. A Mr Rudder, an experienced California gold-digger, is now at work at the diggings. There are also several magistrates plying their picks and cradles most laboriously, but we have not heard with what success. In fact, there appears every probability of a complete social revolution in the course of time. Those who are not already departed are making preparations. Servants of every description are leaving their various employments, and the employers are, *per necessitatem*, preparing to follow. But notwithstanding all this, we feel confident that a reaction will speedily take place. The approach of winter and wet weather will do something towards cooling the ardour of the excited multitude.'

In other Australian papers we have similar accounts of the frenzy. In the new and unforeseen position in

\* Bathurst Free Press, May 17, 1851.

which it was placed, the colonial government seems to have acted with much prudence. A proclamation was issued to the effect that the gold found at the diggings was the property of the crown, and that it could be taken only by procuring a licence, and according to certain regulations. The licence, as is since made known, is for a month, and costs each individual 30s. All persons are licensed on these easy terms who can shew a discharge from former employers—an arrangement designed to check the sudden absconding of servants, but which, it is almost needless to say, will fail in that effect. To preserve order, a government-commissioner as head-magistrate was also despatched to the scene of operations; this onerous appointment being given to Mr J. R. Hardy. A police force under Captain Battye was at the same time sent off to preserve the peace on the road between Sydney and Bathurst. It may be hoped that by these means, as well as by the due admixture of a respectable class of persons at the diggings, something like order will be maintained, and society saved from the evils that have afflicted the Californian community.

The following letter in the 'Sydney Morning Herald,' purporting to be written by G. Lucy, and dated Bathurst, May 18, conveys an account of the diggings and their locality, which will be perused with interest by our readers:—

'Having made a hurried visit to the gold-fields of this district, for the purpose of satisfying myself as to the reality of the reports which were daily arriving in Bathurst during last week, causing the greatest excitement amongst all classes, I have forwarded a slight account of the diggings, thinking it would not be unacceptable to many of your readers. The locality is about thirty-five miles hence; eight miles from Cornish Town, and twelve from Orange. There is a tolerable bridle-road, and even loaded drays are brought down to the spot by taking the road through Blackman's Swamp. It is at the junction of Summer Hill and Lewis' Ponds Creeks, where the diggers are now at work. There is nothing peculiar in the appearance of the country, broken ridges and continuous hills of quartz being the principal features. On arriving at the diggings, which lie in the narrow bed of the creek, where there is not level standing-room for fifty people, a singular and exciting scene presented itself. About two hundred individuals were congregated (though large parties were hourly arriving), forming as motley a group as could possibly be brought together, and attired in every conceivable style of costume, the fierce and brigandish seeming to be the one most in vogue. From the magistrate down to the shirtless vagabond, the features of every one bore an expression of bewildered anxiety. It was evident that by far the greater portion of the people went there with the expectation of picking up lumps of gold among the rocks and stones of the creek, many arriving with nothing but a pick or a spade, and not provision even for a single meal, or a covering for night. The ridges all around were covered with hundreds of horses, though there is not sufficient grass to feed a dozen. I did not see more than three camps erected, the majority of the diggers seeming to imagine that a covering overhead is totally unnecessary in this arid region; and bitterly must they have repented for their want of forethought, as towards evening a pelting shower came down, continuing at intervals during the whole night and next day, no doubt considerably cooling the ardour of the gold-seekers. With respect to the quantity of gold to be found, no one with the slightest knowledge of geology can doubt that it exists in great abundance somewhere near the spot. A spadeful of earth taken from any part of the banks of the creek, and carefully washed, will produce gold more or less. But nothing can be done without proper machines for separating the gold from the earth, sand, and particles of iron which are

found with it. I did not see more than three of these rockers or cradles at work, the greater part of the diggers contenting themselves with whirling the earth and water round in a tin basin, the lid of a saucepan, or even their hats, and letting it gradually wash over the sides, leaving the grains of gold at the bottom; and most amusing was it to observe their anxious features while peering most intensely into the dish for the coveted metal, the bystanders, who had perhaps only just arrived, appearing equally as anxious, doubtless judging what their own chance of success would be. I heard many say they had found considerable pieces that morning, but I did not see them. One gentleman, with a cradle, shewed me his produce of three or four hours' labour out of seven buckets of earth: as nearly as I could judge, I imagine it would fill a good-sized thimble, the largest piece being the size and shape of a flattened pea. The greatest good-humour, badinage, and a disposition to oblige, seemed to prevail; but whether this will last when the worthless characters arrive from all parts of the colony it is difficult to say. It is expected that thousands will soon be on the road from Sydney, many of whom will most certainly be egregiously disappointed, and rue the day they gave up their ordinary avocations for gold-hunting. Let no one come who cannot stand up to his knees in the cold water for hours; who cannot lie down in wet clothes, and sleep under the greenwood-tree; who does not know how to make a damper or a fire when every bit of timber round is soaking wet. The only possible chance of doing any good is for six or eight to form a company, provide themselves with a tent, plenty of provisions, necessary machines and tools; and by incessant labour and co-operation it is not improbable a profit may be realised. The good folks of Bathurst, however, seem to be determined to keep people from coming into the district, by raising their prices to a most unjust and extravagant pitch. Flour is L.40 per ton; 8s. are asked for shoeing a horse, 10s. for a small pick, &c. This absurd overreaching will compel many industrious men—determined to stick to their work notwithstanding the temptation to go gold-hunting—to find employment elsewhere. The flock-masters are in great consternation; already have flocks of sheep been deserted by their shepherds, and left in the bush. I was greatly amused on returning from the bustling scene, when meeting a magistrate, a sheep-owner, attired in his mining-frock, who, accompanied by his brothers and two heavily-laden carts for the diggings, deplored the consequences that would fall upon those who are seized with the gold mania.'

That the very success that attends these explorations affords matter for regret is a saddening consideration. By the universal flight of servants, more particularly shepherds and sheep-shearers, prodigious loss will be incurred, and the ordinary wool export-trade seriously damaged. All the Australian colonies will thus suffer more or less from the discovery; and even New Zealand will come in for a share of the disaster—though, it must be admitted, likewise for a share of the benefit, for a market will be opened for its grain which it never anticipated. To take the worst view of the affair: the evils can only be temporary, for a vast wave of emigration will speedily roll like a flood towards the antipodes, and fill up all the vacancies that can be made. And as each emigrant becomes a large consumer of British manufactures, it is evident that the home country, in parting with its redundant labour, will largely profit by these marvellous Australian diggings.

NOTE.—Since the above was in type, additional information has reached us from New South Wales, confirming all previous reports respecting the Bathurst Diggings, and an earnest appeal is made to this country for supplies of emigrants, able and willing to fill the

places which have been vacated by shepherds, and almost all other classes of assistants. Never, as it appears to us, has there been such a favourable opening for persons intending to emigrate to Australia.

### CHRISTOPHER NORTH.

FROM THE LITERATURBLÄTTER OF A GERMAN PH. D.

PROUD I am to be the countryman of the many-sided Goethe, and the impassioned Schiller, and Jean Paul the Only One, and Kant and Fichte, Tieck and Fouqué, Klopstock and Herder, Wieland and Körner. And I contend that there are characteristics in which Germany towers pre-eminently above all other peoples and tongues—intellectual traits wherein no other nation under heaven approximates to her likeness. But, as a literature, the English, I confess, seems to me superior to ours—in effect at least, if not in essence. It is vastly our master in style; in the art of saying things to the purpose, and not going to sleep—to sleep? perchance to dream—by the way. If we have authors who stand all alone in their glory, so have they—and more of them. We have no current specimen of the man I am going to write about—we have no Christopher North.

When I visited in May the exhibition of the English Royal Academy,\* much as I was interested in Landseer's 'Titania and Bottom,' and MacIise's homage to Caxton, and other kindred paintings, on no canvas did I gaze so long and so lovingly as on that wherein the art of a Watson Gordon had depicted the form and features of Professor Wilson. One thing saddened me—to see him an old man, and leaning on his staff. The ideal Christopher North of the 'Noctes,' and yet more of the 'Dies Boreales,' is indeed preternaturally aged—old as the hills, the gray hills he loves so well. But I was not prepared to find so many traces of eld on the face of one whom Scott, it seems but the other day, was chiding with merry enjoyment the while for his tricky young-mannishness.

Would that my countrymen were better acquainted with this 'old man eloquent!' He deserves their pains. The Scotch assure me I cannot appreciate him, not being Scotch myself; and in principle they are right—doubtless I lose many a recondite beauty, many a racy allusion, many a *curiosa felicitas* in his fascinating pages, through my comparative ignorance of the niceties of a language, for the elucidation of which he himself employs a recurring series of the marginal note—'See Dr Jamieson.' But there is many a cognate idiom and phrase which the German recognises in the Doric, and appreciates better probably than does the denizen of Cockaigne. However this may be, I exult with all my heart and mind and soul and strength in the effusions of Christopher North. Sure I am that every German who at my instigation studies the writings of Wilson will feel grateful for the hint. One will admire him as the gentle and pathetic tale-teller, as in 'Lights and Shadows of Scottish Life,' 'The Foresters,' and 'The Trials of Margaret Lyndsay.' Another, as the refined, reflective, tender, and true poet, who has sung in sweetest verse, 'The Isle of Palms,' 'Unimore,' and 'The City of the Plague.' A third, as the accomplished metaphysician and professor of moral philosophy, who can make his abstruse themes as rich with graceful drapery and jewelled front as with our ontologists they are withered and dry as dust. A fourth, as the imaginative commentator on the world's classics—Homer, Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth—

around whose immortal lines he throws a new halo, so that their old glory seems as nothing by reason of the glory that excellet. A fifth, as the ardent politician, dashing, like an eagle on a dovecot, among Whigs, Radicals—*et hoc genus omne*. A sixth, as the shrewd, satirical, caustic reviewer, dealing out retribution wholesale on a herd of poetasters. And as there are eclectics who will thus admire him in some one or other of his aspects; so there are syncretists (myself among the number) who admire him in all.

Six summers have now come and gone since I learned to know and love Christopher North. In 1845 I was lecturing to a drowsy class on certain obscure developments of transcendental philosophy, when I had to call to order a red-haired foreign student, who, in violation of lecture-room decorum, was intent on the perusal of some work of fiction, and whose eyes, as I saw when he raised them at my protest, were suffused with tears. After lecture I summoned him to my rooms. He was a Caledonian to the backbone—from the wilds of Ross-shire—as primitive a specimen in dialect, though not in intellect, as that memorable stripling who told Dr Chalmers\* before his class at St Andrews that Julius Cæsar was the father of the correct theory of population. The book he had been crying over—and his eyes were still red—was Andersen's 'Dichters Bazaar,' and the passage that affected the poor fellow was that descriptive of Andersen's *rencontre* at Innsbruck with a young Scotchman, on a sentimental journey, who manifested so much emotion at the resemblance of the scenery to his own native hills, and broke into a torrent of tears when Andersen, to intensify the association, began to sing a well-known Scottish air. Sentimental myself, I could not for the life of me scold one so susceptible to *Heimweh*; so instead of abusing I began to pump him, catechising him about the literature and national characteristics of his 'land of the mountain and the flood.' Of all living authors he panegyrised chiefly Professor Wilson, whom hitherto I had known by repute only as the editor of *Blackwood*. He dwelt enthusiastically on the critic, the poet, the novelist, and last, not least, the man; telling me many a tradition, apocryphal or otherwise, of his blithe boyhood, his Oxford career, and his doings at Ellerray; how he threw himself into the roistering companionship of gipsies and tinkers, potters and strolling-players; how he served as waiter, and won all hearts—Boniface's included—at a Welsh inn;† how at Oxford he repeatedly fought a pugnacious shoemaker; and how, in all such encounters, he magnanimously recorded himself beaten when beaten he was.‡ I returned to my rooms that day with a pile of Wilson's writings under my arm.

The critics *en masse* will support me, I apprehend, in preferring Wilson's prose to his poetry. The latter is apt to pall upon the taste; it is too dainty, too elevated, too ornamental a thing for the uses of this 'working-day world.' It is delicious when seen in an extract; but, read in *extenso*, it is almost suggestive of a yawn. Moods of mind there are when it pleases almost beyond compare; but they are exceptional, transient. If you exult in it at soft twilight, and find that it then laps your senses in elysium, the probability is that at mid-day you will wonder what has come to it or to yourself that the spell is broken, the rapture diluted into satiety, the surge and swell of inspiration smoothened to a dead calm. According to Dr Moir, its grand characteristics are delicacy of sentiment, and ethereal elegance of description—refining and elevating whatever it touches.§ It avoids the stern and the rugged

\* The Herr Professor whose notes are here 'done into English,' spent the spring and early summer of the present year in England. To mention his name would, as he modestly says, interest a very few; and might, to the many, give occasion only to witticisms at the expense of Teutonic cacophony.—Translator.

\* Life, by Hanna, vol. iii.

† Recorded also in Howitt's *Homes and Haunts*, vol. ii.

‡ This is mentioned, too, in De Quincy's *Autobiography*.

§ See 'Sketches of the Poetical Literature of the Past Half Century,' by D. M. Moir: Blackwood & Sons, 1851. These



at the expense of the sublime; preferring whatever is gentle, placid, and tender. The result of this, however, is—as Lord Jeffrey pointed out—along with a tranquillising and most touching sweetness, a certain monotony and languor, which ordinary readers of poetry will be apt to call dullness. As Wilson's friend, Macnish—the modern Pythagorean—characterises it:

'His strain like holy hymn upon the ear doth float,  
Or voice of cherubim, in mountain vale remote.'

It is not of the earth, earthly. But so much the more it fails in human interest, and seems to soar above human sympathies—as though, like the Ettrick Shepherd's 'Kilmeny,' or our own Fouqué's 'Undine,' the link were broken which 'bound it in the bundle of life' with common clay. 'I should like,' said Allan Cunningham, 'to live in a world of John Wilson's making: how lovely would be the hills, how romantic the mountains; how clear the skies, how beauteous the light of the half-risen sun; how full of paradise the vales, and of music the streams! The song of the birds would be for ever heard, the bound of the deer for ever seen; thistles would refuse to grow, and hail-showers to descend; while amid the whole woman would walk a pure, unspotted creature, clothed with loveliness as with a garment, the flowers seeking the pressure of her white feet, the wind feeling enriched by her breath, while the eagle would hesitate to pounce upon the lambs, charmed into a dove by the presence of beauty and innocence.' This applies rather to the 'Isle of Palma' and to 'Unimor' than to the 'City of the Plague,' the very title of which is sufficiently discordant with the above description, and the subject of which was declared monstrous by Southey.\* 'It is,' says he, 'out-Germanising the Germans; it is like bringing rack, wheels, and pincers upon the stage to excite pathos.' Perhaps the *tu quoque* might be here retorted upon the author of 'Thalaba' with considerable unctiousness; and at any rate he must include in his censure the genius of Dante, of Boccaccio, of Defoe, of Manzoni, of Shelley, of Brockden Brown, and many another greater or lesser star. One cannot help wondering, however, that even with this theme Wilson should write so little that is powerful amid so much that is pathetic; that he should raise so few spirits of terror from the vasty deep of his imagination; and that, at his warm touch, the freezing horrors of such a topic should melt, thaw, and dissolve themselves almost into a gentle dew. Descriptions 'beautiful exceedingly' abound in this work; and of his minor poems, 'gems of purest ray serene' are 'Edith and Nora,' the 'Address to a Wild Deer,' and the 'Lines Written in a Highland Glen.'

To his novels and tales, with all their peculiar charm, the same objection of 'languor and monotony' is also applicable. He is too apt to cancel from his pictures whatever would offend a too fastidious ideal; to eliminate every negative quantity; to give us the rose without the thorn, poetry without prose, man without original sin. His shepherds and shepherdesses, his swains and cottars, are nearly as unreal, though far more interesting, than the pastoral creatures dear to Shenstone and Dresden china. They flit before us like figures in bas-relief, which want more background and less statuesque uniformity. Jeffrey, in his review of 'Margaret Lyndsay,' 'Lights and Shadows,' &c. objected to them as lamentably deficient in that bold and

free vein of invention, that thorough knowledge of the world, and rectifying spirit of good sense which redeem all Scott's flights from the imputation either of extravagance or affectation. But all must acknowledge the exquisite pathos and the generous enthusiasm consecrated everywhere by a pervading purity of sentiment, which make them justly dear to youth and innocence.

Come we now to his connection with periodical literature. Putting on the anonymous, he forthwith became broader in girth, higher in stature, greater in strength. Like the cap of Fortunatus, it seemed to endow him with new faculties. Addison says there are few works of genius that come out at first with the author's name; and adds: 'For my own part, I must declare, the papers I present the public are like fairy favours, which shall last no longer than while the author is concealed.' No sooner had Christopher North shouldered his crutch than he shewed how fields are won—handling it like a sceptre that made him monarch of all he surveyed. He did not indeed use his liberty as a cloak for licentiousness, but he was laughingly and laughably reckless in his doings and darings. Coleridge in one of his monologues, as De Staël called them, blamed his lawless expenditure of talent and genius in his protracted management of 'Blackwood,' but at the same time exclaimed: 'How can I wish that Wilson should cease to write what so often soothes and suspends my bodily miseries, and my mental conflicts!' How indeed? With such cordiality in his chuckle, such glee in his eccentricities, such genius in his vagaries, such method in his madness, who could frown on the extravaganzas of North any more than utter grave strictures on the 'All Fools' Day' of Charles Lamb? It was all so genial that you forgave everything and forgot nothing.† And then his eloquence was truly as 'the rush of mighty waters'—

'How the exulting thoughts,  
Like children on a holiday, rush forth  
And shout, and call to every humming bee,  
And bless the birds for angels!'‡

One of his 'Cockney' victims, upon whose shoulders he had laid the crutch with more bone-crushing (*beinbrechend*) emphasis than any other man's, eulogises his prose as a rich territory of exuberance congenial with Keats's poetry—a forest tempest-tossed indeed, compared with those still valleys and enchanted gardens, but set in the same region of the remote, the luxuriant, the mythological—governed by a more wilful and scornful spirit, but such as hates only from an inverted spirit of loving, impatient of want of sympathy.§ Well might poor Hartley Coleridge call Christopher North the happiest speaking mask since Father Shandy and Uncle Toby were silent; 'for Elia,' he adds, 'is Charles himself.' The unique style of Wilson's criticisms is hardly conceivable by those amongst us who are ignorant of his mother-tongue: we have nothing I can point to by way of parallel, hardly even of resemblance. He has the wit and searching intellect of Lessing; the facile analysis of Brockhaus; the philosophic tendency of the

\* Table-Talk, vol. II.

† How characteristic these writings were of the man may be illustrated by a letter of Mrs Grant of Laggan, who, after calling Wilson 'the most provoking creature imaginable,' proceeds to say: 'He is young, handsome, wealthy, witty; has great learning, exuberant spirits, a wife and children that he dotes on, and no vice that I know, but, on the contrary, virtuous principles and feelings. Yet his wonderful eccentricity would put anybody but his wife wild. She, I am convinced, was actually made on purpose for her husband, and has that kind of indescribable controlling influence over him that Catherine is said to have had over that wonderful savage the Czar Peter.'—*Memoirs and Correspondence of Mrs Grant of Laggan*.

‡ Sydney Yendys: 'The Roman.' Scene VI.

§ Leigh Hunt: 'Scen.'

|| In his introduction to Massinger. Elsewhere Hartley Coleridge writes:—'Wilson is the best critic that Scotland has produced; nay, that is saying too little. When at his best, he is almost the best that Britain has produced.'—*Essays*, II.

sketches were lectures delivered to the Philosophical Institution of Edinburgh in the winter of 1850-1. The volume is a faithful and generous estimate of the great poets of the age just past or still current. We do not, indeed, know any book which may be more confidently recommended to the young of the present day who may be anxious to know what is best worth their attention in one important branch of recent literature. Most sad it is to reflect that the amiable and accomplished author—the *DELTA* of 'Blackwood's Magazine'—was suddenly cut off in the vigour of his days in July last.—*Ed. C. E. J.*

\* In a letter to C. W. W. Wynn, 1816.

younger Schlegel; the discriminative faculty of the elder; Herder's catholic sympathies; Tieck's lively enthusiasm; much of Heine's withering sarcasm; and the dashing vigour of Menzel: together with a *nescio quid* which harmonises their discords; a something that separates him from their conventionalisms, and makes him like 'a star that dwells apart': a comet if you will—but glorious in its vagrancy—brilliant with a light that never was on sea or shore of the *orbis veteribus notus*. His nature endowed with what Tennyson ascribes to the dead friend he memorialises so fondly:

'Heart-affluence in discursive talk  
From household fountains never dry;  
The critic clearness of an eye  
That saw through all the Muses' walk.'\*

With all his partisanship and consummate irony, he is justly praised for tolerance, and for the fine spirit of frankness and generous good-will which animates many of his reviews of political and literary foes; for, as Justice Talfourd observes,† notwithstanding his own decided opinions, he has a compass of mind large enough to embrace all others which have noble alliances within its range. Seldom, if ever in fact, was so sound and warm a heart allied to so clear a head. If our Gutzkow is not more trenchant in his satire and scorn, neither is our Jean Paul more gentle, more meltingly tender, more winning and womanly in his gushing pathos. 'The Recreations of Christopher North' collect some of his choicest miscellanies; but why does he not make a selection also from that glorious repository of eccentric, self-willed, ebullient genius, the 'Nights at Ambrose's?' Nowhere else does he appear to such advantage. He there riots in prodigality of intellectual and imaginative wealth. He deluges you with good things, and swells the flood with your own tears, now of sorrow and now of mirth. He hurries you from sublimity to burlesque; from homily to *jeu d'esprit*; from grave disquisition to obstreperous fun: feasting you alternately with the items in Polonius's bill of fare—tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral: Seneca cannot be too heavy nor Plautus too light. The 'Noctes' shew a dramatic power one could not have surmised from the conduct of his poetry. An intelligent English critic remarks, that, barring an occasional irregularity of plot, they are perfect specimens of comedy.‡ If any fellow-countryman among my readers (*ex hypothesi*) are strangers to the English language, let him for once believe the assurance of an Anglo-maniac, that the language is worth learning if only to read the 'Noctes Ambrosianæ.' Robert Hall, aged and agonised by disease, betook himself—prostrate on the sofa—to the study of Italian, that he might read Dante. Youthful Germans, hale, hearty, and aspiring, take example by the Baptist preacher. O the aurora borealis of those 'Noctes,' dark with excessive bright! May their shadow never be less!

NOTE.—Since this paper was written, the merits of Professor Wilson have been recognised by his country, in the form of a handsome pension conferred by the government; but we deeply lament to add that still more recently the 'old man eloquent' has been stricken by severe illness, and is for the present confined to his

\* In Memoriam.

† Life and Letters of Charles Lamb. Lamb and Wilson met once only. Talfourd tells us they walked out from Enfield (Lamb's residence) together, and strolled happily a long summer day; not omitting, however, a call for a refreshing draught. Lamb called for a pot of ale or porter—half of which would have been his own usual allowance; and was delighted to hear the professor, on the appearance of the foaming tankard, say reproachfully to the waiter, 'And one for me!'

‡ Indeed, I know not any comedy in which actual conversation is so naturally imitated, without ever stiffening into debate or amiable oratory, or slipping into morning-call twaddle.—Hartley Coleridge.

chamber, and the care of his attached family. In Scotland, as the one event was a matter of universal gratification—for Wilson has long been regarded with pride as the chief and representative of his country's literature—so will the other event be everywhere felt as a grievous, though we would hope temporary, misfortune.—Ed.

### THE FOOL OF LABOUDIE.

SOME people are all hand and some all heart. The first do and the others feel. The one is always at work—labouring, creating, producing; the other spends his life in deploring the miseries of humanity, its sufferings, its wrongs; but there he stops. The same in private life: A man of hand supports his family, gives them good beef and mutton, dresses them well, and proves that he loves them by making them happy; the man of heart feels intensely if they are sick, has tears for the slightest ill that happens, deplors their want of luxuries and necessities, sits by his chimney-corner and talks, but does nothing; proving, after all, that he loves but himself. He is the most amiable man in the world, a general favourite in society, an outwardly affectionate father and husband; but his children are half-starved, and his wife goes about in an old gown, which the man of hand's wife would give away to some beggar to whom it would be useful and welcome. Not that we object to heart; far from it. A man cannot have too much feeling if he allies with it the head to conceive and the hand to execute. A man wholly without heart is a monster; and the great defect of Napoleon's character was, that with a mighty head and stupendous hand he had scarcely any heart. It is the union of hand and heart, with a head to guide both, which makes a man a useful member of society.

Ernest Delavigne was the only child of a widow. His father had been a superior farmer of considerable property, and had died leaving the land to his wife and son. But Ernest, though fond of the country, aspired to be something better than the peasantry around him. He lived in a part of France where ignorance prevailed over knowledge; where bad roads and impenetrable bogs retarded the progress of civilisation; and where the people were in that happy state of ignorance which prevailed over most parts of Europe some two hundred years ago: where agriculture caused twice the labour and gave half the returns which it afforded to the more enlightened; and where no one had ever yet attempted to penetrate the crust of barbarism which generally prevailed. Ernest had been educated at a town-school, and when a young man completed his education at a provincial college. Though acquiring all the general knowledge which was conveyed by the professors, he devoted himself particularly to chemistry as applied to agriculture, and to the formation of new aratorial instruments. He returned home at twenty-one full of magnificent projects. He would effect a revolution in the land; he would open a course of lectures; he would teach them the advantages of all the new instruments of draining, of manuring; and, above all, he would effect a complete alteration in the dwellings—close, dirty, unwholesome, and comfortless now. Admirable and praiseworthy notion was that of Ernest Delavigne. We shall see how he carried it out.

Ernest had, as he thought, a very plain way before him. He set up as a lecturer, with the honest design of instructing his less intelligent neighbours. Unfortunately, however, nobody went to his lectures; and all his solicitations met with a polite but peremptory rebuff. The people, in fact, liked their own way best, and would believe nothing to the contrary on mere hearsay. He was generally spoken of as a fool for his pretensions—the 'Fool of Laboudie.'

The manner in which Ernest was treated at length



induced him to abandon all attempts at reformation, and he betook himself to Paris a somewhat wiser man. Experience had cooled his ardour for improving mankind. Arrived in Paris, he took up his lodging in the *quartier Latin*, and went to see M. Benoit, a notary in high repute with the old aristocracy, who confided to him the management of their pecuniary affairs with a confidence and security which spoke volumes for his honesty and honourable character. He received M. Ernest kindly, listened to what he had to say patiently, and then gave him advice. He approved of his selecting medicine as a profession, and promised, if it pleased him, to introduce him into good society, that the intervals of time between his studies might be well spent. Ernest accepted gladly, and at once began the study of his new profession. It suited his character, his feeling for suffering humanity, to be the healer of the sick; and the prospect of associating as a student with the upper classes of society was pleasant and agreeable. He went to public lectures; he read hard; and in the evenings he visited one or two *salons*, which were freely opened to him on the recommendation of M. Benoit.

He found this way of passing his time vastly agreeable. He liked the conversation of ladies; for they, as he abstained from politics, sympathised with his views, approved of his humanitarian principles, and proved always an attentive audience. One evening he was speaking of his old and favourite topic—the introduction of agricultural improvements into the country—when a young girl joined in the debate.

‘Oh, monsieur,’ she cried warmly, ‘I am happy to meet with some one of my way of thinking. I lived in a country district which is very much behind the age, and having been some years in England, which enjoys such a vast superiority in this particular over any other part of the world, I am deeply anxious to see the example of our neighbours followed.’

Ernest was delighted, and after a few minutes he addressed his whole conversation to M<sup>lle</sup> Louise de Redonté. He found her to his astonishment learned in all farming details, though a year younger than himself; aware of more improvements in machinery than he had ever known of; and deeply conversant with all that was necessary to the comfort and well-being of both men and animals employed in agriculture. Before the end of the evening Ernest was in love. A French novelist would tell us that he had met his destiny. At all events, he considered himself fortunate to have fallen in with so charming a person, who joined to great beauty and a compliment to a taste for his favourite subjects of thought and talk.

Ernest and Louise met continually, and each day they renewed their intimacy. They talked together, they danced together, and before the end of three months the young man scarcely missed an evening at the house of M<sup>me</sup> de Lastange, where she resided when in town. People at last began to insinuate to the old lady, that the friendship of the young people was rather warmer than should properly exist between a student in medicine and a rich heiress. A few days after this Ernest missed M<sup>lle</sup> Louise de Redonté from the evenings of M<sup>me</sup> de Lastange, who, without the least change in her manner towards him, informed him that she was gone to the country to her uncle, where indeed she spent the greater part of the year. She was a kind-hearted woman, and by this separation simply wished to spare both the pain which she thought must ensue if their affections became engaged. Ernest felt very dull: the charm of the *soirées* was gone. He did not cease to go, however, because it was probable that he might again see her there, but his visits became less frequent, and thus the season ended.

During the long summer months that ensued Ernest continued the study of his profession. He wrote to his mother that he should not come that year to the country, because his disgust at his neighbours was

so great he could not bear to meet with them. Besides, he wished to continue his studies, which would suffer by interruption. But he did not now devote himself to his books with half the same zest with which he had begun. His thoughts were far away in that country region, wherever it was, where Louise resided, and he thought the summer never would end. To distract his attention he varied his reading, added novels, poetry, and history to his scientific books; and thus with many a yawn, and many a longing, and many a weary hour, the time passed, and when the *salon* of M<sup>me</sup> de Lastange again opened, Ernest presented himself the very first evening.

Louise de Redonté was there, more lovely than ever; and she welcomed the young man, as he eagerly advanced to greet her, with a smile which filled him with rapture. M<sup>me</sup> de Lastange looked on in some alarm. Louise was in mourning: she had lost her uncle nearly six months, and she was rich in the extreme. She was surrounded at once by a perfect host of suitors, but she gave encouragement to none. Ernest still continued her favourite companion, to the great annoyance of the mass of young men about town, who would have been delighted to have given her their name, and to have spent her hundred thousand francs of annual income. Still no one looked upon the intimacy of Louise and Ernest as anything likely to end seriously. The crowds of suitors who filled the *salons* of M<sup>me</sup> de Lastange supposed that the young lady was a clever person, and shewed a preference for the conversation of the medical student—an individual she could not marry—simply that she might look round unobserved and unsuspected, and choose for herself.

‘My dear Louise,’ said her friend one day to her, ‘how much longer do you mean to keep the men in suspense? There are more than a dozen dying for love!’—

‘Of my château and cash,’ replied Louise laughing; ‘but I am quite sure I shall see them all as rosy as ever next season.’

‘Do you not, then, mean to select your future husband before you again bury yourself in your gloomy castle?’ said M<sup>me</sup> de Lastange in an alarmed tone.

‘My dear madame, I am rich, I am young, I have time and independence. I shall not choose a husband until I have found a lover whose affection is real, and whom I myself can like.’

M<sup>me</sup> de Lastange mentioned several of her suitors with high praise, but Louise shook her head, and found fault with all.

‘I have no patience with you,’ cried the good lady. ‘You encourage that young student so much, that you have no time to judge the merits of others. I have a great mind to close my door against him.’

‘My dear De Lastange,’ replied Louise gravely, ‘if you cease to receive my *protégé*, you will make my evenings very dull. I shall run to the country a month sooner.’

M<sup>me</sup> de Lastange sighed, and turned away, but she studiously avoided letting Ernest notice her annoyance; still, when the friends were together, she looked annoyed, and almost began to agree with those who supposed Louise to have some secret object in encouraging the medical student.

‘Where do you intend settling on the completion of your studies?’ said Louise one evening.

‘In Paris, or some other large town,’ replied Ernest.

‘In town! I thought you preferred country life,’ continued she, as if somewhat disappointed.

‘I did once, but I have changed my mind. I originally intended devoting myself to agriculture; but now I have a profession, I prefer living in cities.’

‘But why?’

‘In the first place, to live in the country I should require a wife; but I despair of finding one suited to me,’ replied Ernest unaffectedly.

'But what kind of a wife would you like?' asked Louise, looking at him curiously.

'May I tell you?' said he timidly, looking up at her like a child looking at his mother when asking a favour. Of course he was allowed to speak his mind; and, need we add, there was in almost no time a thorough mutual understanding. Mademoiselle was a Frenchwoman, and, as such, was not burdened with diffidence.

Next evening it was generally known that Ernest Delavigne and Louise de Redonté were affianced, to the great consternation of all fortune-hunters, and the great joy of all those who sympathised with truthful, feeling, and sincere affection. But the salons of Mme de Lastange were no longer crowded: the host of interested suitors vanished.

'Do you know,' said Louise one evening as they were talking of the future, 'that I mean to make a regular patriarch of you? I have determined to introduce among all my farmers and their neighbours the latest improvements, and to give them the benefit of all the agricultural discoveries of England and France.'

'It is useless making such attempts,' replied Ernest gravely; 'you will but lose your temper and your time.'

'Monsieur! Why you are as bad as the fool of Laboudie.'

'Hah!' said Ernest, turning very pale.

'Why,' continued the merry girl, without noticing his uneasiness, 'you must know that my castle is close to Laboudie. My uncle was the Count de Plouviers.'

'Oh!' replied Ernest.

'Well, there came from a neighbouring town, some two years back, a young man belonging to our place, who had studied agriculture, and who desired, it appears, to reform the neighbourhood. Instead of introducing the change himself, however, he tried to persuade others to do so; told the ignorant farmers of what they might do, but did not attempt to demonstrate his theories. People naturally enough laughed at his lectures—his disquisitions especially; as I am told he had land himself, and never thought of trying the sensible experiment of shewing his neighbours by practice the advantages he believed, but did not know to exist. Such well-meaning men are worse than useless: they stand more in the way of real progress than the most obstinate devotee of antiquity; they are mere sentimental, and not practical reformers. But why so gloomy, Ernest? Surely I have not offended you? I see you are a little unwell. Good-night. Go home to bed, and tell your old *conciergerie* to make you some *tisane*. It will soon be my office to take care of monsieur when he thinks proper to be ill.'

Ernest took her proffered hand, shook it even more heartily than usual, and went away. It was early: just before midnight, and as the other guests were about to depart, the *bonne* of Mme de Lastange gave a letter to Louise, who alone, in a little boudoir where she had retired, since none but card-players remained, at once opened and read it.

'I write not in anger but with deep sorrow. I love you too much to expose you to a life of misery. You have expressed too much contempt for persons of my character not to be very unhappy when you know me better. You will doubtless find, however, one worthy of you. I shall seek, after that severe but just lesson which I have now received, to win your esteem now that your love is impossible. Remember me kindly, if it be only because I have sufficient sense left to save you in time from everlasting unhappiness. This night, at eleven, I start for home.'

'What have I done?' cried Louise. 'Poor Ernest! how generous, how noble, how good! Poor fellow! how those thoughtless, bitter words must have gone to his heart. I must stop him. But no: he is gone. Well, I must wait until to-morrow. What a night he will pass travelling! How cruel he must think

me!' And away she hurried to bed, as if by so doing the morrow would sooner come.

Meanwhile Ernest, whose mind had been enlarged and elevated by more extended studies, went away on his road home, subdued, dejected, and yet not wholly cast down. He saw distinctly the truth of all that Louise had said; he perceived where his own errors lay, and determined to profit by the lesson. He arrived at home after a long journey, calm, serious, and full of strong conviction of his own former pride, which made his present humility all the more pleasing. His mother was delighted to see him; and when he declared his intention of devoting himself in future to the farm, she was doubly pleased. He took up his former quarters, and then, after a day's rest, started for a long walk to recruit his body, somewhat enervated by study and town life. He followed the high road which led to the Château de Plouviers, along which were several small farms, and one or two very extensive ones. He walked along, his eyes fixed on the ground, in deep meditation, until he was suddenly aroused by a loud voice.

'Hollo there! Monsieur Ernest, I want to speak with you,' said the very old farmer whom he had first made an attempt upon nearly two years before.

'What is it?' replied young Delavigne, raising his head a little haughtily; 'what can you have to say to the Fool of Laboudie?'

'Sir!' cried the other, as they approached each other; 'I beg your pardon, and we all beg your pardon. But do you not see we did not understand your fine talk? and we could not believe what we didn't see. But then M<sup>lle</sup> Louise, our guardian angel, had just finished her model-farm, and there she had all the improvements of which you told us. Well, when we saw that really there were better ways than we knew of, you see we agreed to try, and I've bought a new plough—here it is—and it's a little out of order, and it's just to ask your advice about mending it that I called you.'

'With pleasure,' said Ernest, who had listened to the other's words with deep interest. 'Oh, it's nothing: a couple of nails and a screw is all that's wanted.'

Half an hour later the defect was remedied, and the two were at breakfast together. The old man said that if Ernest would now open his lectures they would be well attended of an evening; and if confined to descriptions referring to things the farmers began to understand, would continue so. The young man replied that he would make himself acquainted with what had been done, and would deliver his first lecture on the following Sunday—the only day when a rural population in France could be collected together for such a purpose. Next day Ernest visited the model-farm of the Château de Plouviers. He found a considerable tract of land under cultivation. The head was an Englishman, who had resided some years in Normandy, and his assistants were French. He had, moreover, fourteen pupils, sons of neighbouring farmers. Mr Wilson informed Ernest that it was only the powerful influence of the Count de Plouviers, and the affection of the people for Louise his niece, which had enabled him to obtain their youth to bring up in improved notions. But now, he said, all went along easily. The farmers and their families felt and saw the great benefits which lay within their grasp, and as their patrons gave them facilities for paying for all new instruments by instalments, few refused to avail themselves of the opportunity. On fête days and holidays the whole neighbourhood came to the model-farm, to amuse themselves by looking around; and a change, he said, was already perceptible. One house which had been burnt down close by had been rebuilt upon new principles with regard to comfort and cleanliness, and all were anxious to follow the example.

Ernest was more than ever convinced of the wisdom of the practical course adopted by the Count de Plouviers and Louise de Redonté. He saw clearly that if

we would induce men to believe in our precepts, we must practise them ourselves; and that one example is worth a hundred expositions. He went away filled with admiration at the nobility of character, the sound sense and wisdom, of the young reformer, and with his heart doubly imbued with love for the beautiful girl. He prepared his lecture in his mind during the whole three days which intervened, and when the hour came, entered the barn amid loud applause. The place was full. The whole neighbourhood, male and female, was there, with Mr Wilson, his assistants, and pupils. Everybody understood now that the object of Ernest Delavigne had been good; and all blamed themselves for not comprehending him, though in reality the fault was with him, who had not understood the right way to proceed.

He began. In eloquent words, with deep and strong feeling, he drew a picture of Laboudie before and after the return of Louise from England: he compared in a humorous way the different line pursued by the young lady and the Fool of Laboudie (*great laughter and applause*): he acknowledged her means to be greater, but also allowed that he might have made his own land the model-farm by industriously devoting himself to the very course of improvement which he recommended: he called down the blessings of Heaven on the lovely patroness of the locality, hardly able to restrain tears as he spoke, and then opened with his subject. He used simple and plain language: he spoke of things which all began to understand, and was listened to with deep interest and respectful attention. When he sat down the barn almost seemed about to fall, so violently did they shake it with their bravos and clapping of hands. But it was late, and most had a long way to go; so the assemblage dispersed, after receiving gratefully the promise of a continuation that day-week.

But one person lingered behind, and stood within the barn when all had left it save Ernest and his mother. They had reached the door before they made the discovery.

'Mlle la Comtesse,' said Mme Delavigne respectfully. 'Ernest!' replied she, holding out her hand.

'Louise!' exclaimed he, for he saw in the smile which accompanied the offer of her hand that she was unchanged.

'And so monsieur runs away, and I must run after him!' said Louise, taking his arm. 'What think you, madame,' she continued: 'your son a month ago asked me to marry him; I consented, and a week ago he ran away, declaring he would not have me. Am I not very good to come and fetch him?'

'Louise! Louise!' replied Ernest passionately; 'I did not think you could marry the Fool of Laboudie.'

'My dear friend, my speech of the other evening only shews how wrong people are to judge from appearances. I had only heard a description of you under that name from an old servant, whose gossips I have been sufficiently punished for retailing.'

'But, my son,' cried the amazed mother, 'what is the meaning of all this?'

'My dear madame, that we are to be married, according to previous agreement, to-morrow three weeks,' said Louise, taking her hand; 'and that my husband is about to complete the work which I have so imperfectly begun.'

The whole affair was the most off-hand thing imaginable. The marriage of these two clever people—each clever in a particular way, the very difference of character being useful—created little surprise. Previous to the old revolution, M. de Lavigne—a name Ernest resumed, now he held a social position which ceased to make the aristocratic *de* assuming—had held nearly as high a position as the Count de Plouvieres. But he had not emigrated—preferring to fall into the position of a farmer to a wandering exile in a foreign land. At

the restoration his property, sold during two years he passed in prison as a *suspect*, remained in the hands of the ward purchaser. But he had still a respectable estate, if he farmed it himself, and he continued to do so; and Monsieur Delavigne, despite its plebeian look, was quite as happy as he had been when M. de Lavigne. But his son, for the sake of his wife and her relatives, resumed the name of his right, to which he modestly avoided allusion until a few days before their marriage.

And now it was difficult to say which was the hand and which was the heart. Ernest had learned that mere personal sympathy with the ignorance or misery of our fellow-creatures is of little use, if we do not raise our hands and arms to do something; and that the true friends of humanity are those who do their utmost to diffuse knowledge, to widen the circle of man's utility, and who by example and practice lead the march of civilisation. Every man may thus do his part in the great work of human progress. All that is wanted is the will to be useful. Ernest and Louise de Lavigne were a blessing to the whole country round. Smiling meadows, neat houses, productive fields, healthy peasantry, the absence of any glaring cases of poverty, considerable elevation of mind, above that which is the ordinary lot of the agricultural labourers, are the practical results of this happy disposition of mind, which makes the richest propriétaire of Laboudie consider all around him as his children, to whom he owes a fair share of his time and thoughts. They are intensely beloved, and there are many yet unborn who will yet live to bless the pleasing union in Ernest and Louise of the hand and the heart.

#### MODERN ISLAND OF THE BLEST.

THERE is a little island called Taboga near the eastern shore of the Pacific which realises the poetical fable of the garden of the Hesperides. It is an earthly paradise; and its inhabitants are as happy, and almost as innocent—at least to external appearance—as the first pair. But the fruit of the tree of knowledge is now ripe for the gathering; the old Serpent already raises his crest; and in a year or two more this Eden of the modern world will be turned into a highway of trade, and its village capital metamorphosed into a dirty, drunken, dishonest, unsavoury sea-port town. This is its fate, brought on by no corruption among the people, and no thirst of gain; for, in fact, being happy as they are, they would not take the trouble to be rich if they could help it. But Taboga lies in the path of that inundation of commerce which is about to sweep from one ocean to the other; its geographical position has sealed its destiny; and as soon as the Panama railway is in operation the produce of the eastern and southern world will cross in its rising harbours the manufactures of the west. It is worth while, then, to describe Taboga and its denizens as they exist in the present remarkable year—to delineate the paradise just before it is lost; and we are fortunately favoured with sufficient materials for the purpose in a file of the 'Literary World,' an intelligent journal published in New York.

Let us say, however, at the outset, that the revolution is not to take place with the suddenness of a change in a pantomime, for already some note of preparation has been sounded; already some huge black vessels have floated, panting and snorting and smoking into the quiet harbour; and already some wild and greedy eyes have stared at the gentle people through their orange-groves. These are the pilgrims of California, going or returning; adventurers from the ends of the earth in search of gold, and with few more appliances at first than a pick-axe, a shovel, a sieve, a gin-bottle, and a bowie-knife. Only think of the prospect which meets these unquiet spirits as they sail into the bay, and glide into that enchanted lake which lies at the opening of a green valley between two lofty



hills! There is no village in the ordinary sense of the word; but here and there, at the caprice of the owner, a little hut of cane, thatched with palm-leaves—in all perhaps amounting to a hundred. These, kept together, as it were, by a little white-walled church, peep through the cocoa-nut trees below, or perch upon the rocks that rise upon the beach, or overhang the bay, or cluster at the margin of the water, where the tide when at full murmurs at their door. This beach is the landing-place for the vessels in the harbour; and the heavy ship's boat, mounted on an advancing wave, plunges proudly, high and dry, upon the shore; while the native canoe, aided only by a careless turn of the paddle, leaps like a fish completely out of the water.

In the evening the natives are seen in the greatest numbers upon the beach, whither they come to lie in little groups, and breathe the cool breeze through their Tabogan cigars; while the women lounge around them, cooling their bare feet upon the moist sands; and the naked children amuse themselves with pursuing the receding wave into the sea, and flying with sportive shrieks before its return. These people are of various origin—some Spanish, some African, some Indian; but although the normal features remain, the character of all is alike—genuine Tabogan. The climate of the island subdues everything to itself. The warm, moist atmosphere rounds all corners of temper, and the repose of the still bay sinks into the most unquiet soul. All circumstances conduce to this dream-like quiet. No need of work, no competition, no strife, no anxiety for the future: not one of those causes which in other countries wrinkle the brow and imbitter the heart exists in this enchanted island. Exhaustless nature provides the daily meal: in a climate of perpetual summer, to build even a bamboo-hut seems a work of supererogation; and but for fashion's sake, where would be the need of clothing when there is no such thing as cold to counteract? Still, the men do build huts that look like toys, cultivate round them patches of maize and yams, and scooping out trunks of trees, glide into the sea to add fish to their banquet of fruit. Another dainty comes uncalled: not exactly like the fowls that in a paradise situated elsewhere run about ready roasted, and with a knife and fork commodiously stuck in them, crying 'Come, eat me!'—but the land-crabs of Taboga come down from the hills at a certain season of the year, and do all but walk into the *pot-au-feu*. The name of these creatures, which form a delicious and wholesome viand, is Legion. The whole island seems to stir with them. A sound, as if of the pattering of rain-drops, fills the atmosphere; and on comes the living inundation to meet the tide of the Pacific on the sands, where myriads of eggs are deposited, and form collections for a new inundation next season. The iguana, an immense lizard, provides another treat, furnishing both sport and luxurious eating, for it is hunted in the woods with dogs.

And the people feast and fatten. They have nothing to do but to enjoy the pleasure of doing nothing.

'What a strange drowsiness possesses thee!  
It is the quality of the climate. . . .  
This is a strange repose, to be asleep  
With eyes wide open; standing, speaking, running,  
And yet so fast asleep!'

They are indolent—not lazy; for when they choose they can work, and in working employ great strength. But why trouble themselves with labour? Their drowsiness is graceful and luxurious. They seem to be enjoying the soft perfumed atmosphere, and listening to

'Sounds and sweet airs that give delight and hurt not.'

The forms of the women are beautifully developed, their movements unrestrained, their looks soft and tranquil, and their eyes large, full, and slumbering. They are gaily dressed—as gaily as the enamelled frogs

and lizards of the island, whose colours of green, red, and yellow, glisten in the sun. They owe their finery to the gallantry of the men, who carry boat-loads of the fruit that rots around them to Panama, where they obtain in exchange the gaudiest produce of the looms of Manchester, and bright-coloured Chinese kerchiefs. But the women rarely flaunt their finery abroad. When they have nothing to do, which is almost all day, they swing in their hammocks, and at other times pound the maize for dinner, or plait palm-leaf baskets. The following is a portrait of one of them, to which it is impossible for the imagination to add another trait:—'The beauty of the village is Dolores, one of the full-formed beauties, ripened in the shade and repose of the island. Swinging all day in her hammock, and moving only in the early morning or cool evening, to take her bath in the Taboga stream, and living upon the nutritious maize and rice, and luscious fruit, she has become as white and smooth-skinned, and rounded and plump, as one of the Circassian women in the Turkish sultan's seraglio. Her features have a dreamy, listless expression, though the fulness of her Spanish and voluptuous mouth, and the bright sparkle of her black eyes, save them from dullness and want of interest. Her hair is a jet black, and flows in thick profusion over her rounded shoulders, which her low drapery exposes in all their glistening whiteness and full development. Her hands and feet are small and white, like those of most Spanish women, who take heed that no labour or exposure shall spoil their beauty, of which they are so proud. All fall in love with Dolores, but she is a sad coquette, and the world is warned accordingly.'

It is nonsense to warn the world. The world cannot help loving Dolores; and as for her coquetry, it is a necessary part of her charms. It is the excitement which keeps life alive at Taboga, which preserves the sweets of the island from palling on the taste, and gives its slumber the chastened energy of a dream. Here even the lower animals are sleek and slow. The pelicans standing upon the rocks, with full paunches, look tenderly down into the sea, like an alderman contemplating a tureen of turtle-soup, of which he cannot possibly eat another mouthful till by and by. The fish that furnish their meal are themselves as fat. There is not a venomous insect or reptile in the whole island; or if any of them have poison, they are too well-fed and lazily good-humoured to use it. The only noisy talkers within the enchanted precincts are the many-coloured macaw, which drowns the small still voice of the dove in the woods, and the cricket, whose shrill cry comes upon the ear like the distant whistle of a steam-engine. Among the flowers which perfume the whole atmosphere, the *santo espíritu* is distinguished for its beauty and for the religious sentiment which sanctifies it; its petals being in the form of a dove, and receiving homage almost amounting to worship from the simple inhabitants as a symbol of the Holy Ghost. It is necessary, likewise, to mention in a special manner the *juvencilla*, the soap of the island, which requires no process of manufacture beyond steeping the leaves of the plant in water, and so producing a sweet, soft, creamy lather. This is largely used by the women in their baths, and they ascribe to it their smooth skins and rich redundant hair. We have some hesitation in making this public; for the result of course will be that tons of *juvencilla*—a capital quack name—of English production will immediately make their appearance in the market. But no matter. The very notion of their possessing the Tabogan talisman of beauty will go far towards keeping our women in good-humour; and good-humour, as everybody knows, is the most magical of all cosmetics.

But the reader who has a feeling of art may tell us that our picture wants relief; that Dolores herself is but the highest beauty, the highest indolence, the highest coquetry of the island; and that the whole

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piece has the level of the undulating sea. The criticism is premature, for Taboga has one landmark, one unmistakable character rising jagged and abrupt amid its tranquil population. How this comes about in the case of the individual referred to, it would puzzle philosophy to tell. The other inhabitants, no matter whence their origin, whether coming from east, west, north, or south, could offer no resistance to the spirit of the place. Down they sank at once in that soft, moist, perfumed atmosphere which washed away for ever their identity. But Donna Juana, the doctress, was an exception from the first, and is an exception at this moment. How she came to the island even the oldest inhabitant cannot tell. She was there, she is there—that is all the people know. Tall, gaunt, lean, rawboned, wrinkled, terrible in eye, shrill in voice, wrathful in temper, and with a head of fiery hair, Donna Juana laughs to scorn the influences of the place. There is in the village a Moorish pirate of the Mediterranean, whose wild fancies have subsided into dreamy aspirations, vacillating between Dolores and an iguana steak; but Donna Juana sits upon her bull, the only steed in the place, as upright as a lance, and casts a half-angry, half-disdainful glance upon the world beneath her. The bull is led by her husband, one of the gentle natives, and both these animals are fat, both obedient, both scared in their looks. Donna Juana—the name means gracious, loving!—is a Scotchwoman, and was probably known in her own country by the more familiar name of Jean. She is both dreaded and admired by the bull, the husband, and the islanders in general, and her skill in physic is considered to be the next thing to supernatural. Not an angle of her figure has been rounded, not an accent of her speech softened. She loves dirt as enthusiastically as if she had never emerged from her native wynd; and crouching in her low hut, the dirtiest in the village, surrounded by dirty bottles and dirty papers, filled with dirty drugs, she looks like a sorceress. It will be seen that in point of art she is a necessity of this pleasant land of drowsyhead and dreams.

Taboga may be reckoned the port of Panama, which has no safe anchorage, and cannot be approached within three miles by large vessels. In the former place there is a large, deep, natural harbour, with excellent anchorage, an abundant supply of pure water, and a natural dry dock. This last is a cove between two banks of rock, into which the largest ship may be hauled at full tide till her bowsprit invades the orange-trees at the further end. Here she is left high and dry by the receding water on a smooth hard beach of sand, where repairs can be made as readily as if she lay in a ship-yard. With such advantages it is needless to say that the fate of Taboga will be settled as soon as the railway between the two oceans comes into play, and that the paradise we have felt so happy in describing will be a paradise lost.

#### A LITTLE TOO LATE.

THERE is a class of persons who appear to be born or brought up under the sad fatality of being always a little too late. This seems to be the rule of their life, for it takes place with surprising regularity. It would almost appear that the clock by which they regulated their actions could not be made to keep pace with the common time-piece, and they were fated to abide by its tardy movement. They are not found to be occasionally late, but are invariably so many minutes behind the proper hour. After careful examination, we have discovered that the space of ten minutes is the common degree of difference between this order of men and the rest of mankind. Among them are some of the most diligent, laborious, and calculating of our species, yet they are ten minutes too late for every occupation.

A gentleman of our acquaintance, who is subject to

this mental affection, if so it may be termed, is one of the most shrewd and active persons of the neighbourhood; but nobody who knows him expects him to be in time for any engagement at home or abroad. Ten minutes are always allowed for his appearance. His friends have often rallied him on the subject, and he takes their banter with the utmost good-humour, knowing himself to be in fault, although this consciousness does nothing towards curing him of the malady. He has sometimes suffered great inconvenience in his transactions with strangers, and even sustained pecuniary loss through his tardiness; but he seems to have no moral power to step over the little chasm by which he is separated from the marching-hour of the world. He was advised by an acquaintance to rise a little earlier than usual one fine summer morning, that he might overtake Father Time, and keep beside him all the day. With considerable effort he did rise at half-past seven instead of twenty minutes to eight, but he was not at his business till ten minutes past nine. His friend did not understand the nature of the disease, but thought it originated from sloth: no such thing—he is a most industrious man. We found, however, upon very careful investigation, that there is a tincture of carelessness about his habits; yet only a tincture. In all he does one small flaw may be detected by a minute observer. He forgets to say something, though it is a mere trifle; he omits one of his engagements, but one of no importance; he narrates an incident very nicely, but leaves out one of the circumstances. He dresses in a neat style, but probably goes out without a handkerchief (it is in the pocket of his other coat), or there is a hole in one of his gloves which he has neglected to have repaired; and he sometimes comes home having done *all* his business, but without his umbrella or walking-stick.

We hoped that the punctuality of railways might possibly cure our neighbour, as he frequently had occasion to travel on a particular road. He used seldom to take a place in the stage-coach lest he might be too late, but trusted to there being a vacant seat inside or outside, with which he was content. But when the business was important, and he had previously secured a place in the vehicle, the guard knew his habits, and for the expected *douceur* compromised the hour of starting by finding some cause for five minutes' delay; and if this did not suffice, the coachman drove warily through the streets till the passenger overtook them in a 'Hansom's patent' at full gallop. But the 'Fair-trader' was knocked up by the railway. Many were the warnings he now received that the steam-trains, like time and tide, wait for no man, and he buckled up his courage for the next occasion. Being advised that he should be at London Bridge ten minutes before the time of starting, he made a desperate effort to be punctual. He rose before half-past seven, but was not ready for breakfast till five minutes past eight. He lost the other five minutes in opening his portmanteau to put in a small article which he had forgotten. Still, he was ready to enter the cab at ten minutes to nine, and it was not a full mile to the station. He congratulated himself upon the ease with which the distance would be cleared, and already began to bless the railway for curing him of his inveterate lateness. Mr Cab drove lustily, and reached the north end of London Bridge at precisely five minutes to nine. Two or three minutes were amply sufficient to land him in the booking-office. He had never been so early in his life, for he would have two minutes to spare. But, alas! some coal-wagons blocked up the way, and caused a stoppage on the bridge; and when the cabman had extricated his vehicle and dashed furiously into the station, our friend heard the guard's whistle while paying for his ticket. He was told to run; and as he gained the platform, he saw the train move off majestically before him, like a ship in full sail. 'Stop,

stop! The coach had often stopped for him; but steam-engines have no ears, and the engineer is deaf to every sound but that of the whistle. So he had to wait two hours for another train. When he reached his destination, his friends who were to wait at the station with a carriage had gone home, not expecting him to come that day; so he hired a coach and drove to their residence, entering the parlour just as the servant was clearing away the dinner things. Though much mortified, he laid the whole blame of his disaster upon the thoughtless wagoners who obstructed the bridge; and next time, instead of being ten minutes earlier in starting, he went round by a different way. We have consulted several physicians, physiologists, and natural philosophers on this subject, asking them to explain the phenomena of this habitual lateness; but we cannot learn the cause of the complaint, nor obtain a remedy for our very worthy friend; so that we fear he must continue to the end of his life 'a little too late.'

### THREE TRIPS IN THE AIR.

In the month of June last, three gentlemen went up in a balloon from the Hippodrome at Paris, and having made a voyage of three stages in a north-easterly direction, one of the trio, M. Ivan Matzoeff, published an account of their observations and adventures in the pages of the 'Revue des Deux Mondes,' which possesses sufficient interest to entitle it to reappear in a brief summary. He tells us that he had long cherished a desire for a trip in the atmosphere, against which 'the importance and the charm of the ties that attached him to this lower world struggled in vain;' and at length an irresistible proposal having been made to him—to quote his own words—'on Tuesday, June 5, at seventeen minutes past five in the evening, having provided myself with all the instruments necessary to give some degree of scientific interest to my observations, I mounted the car of the *Eagle* balloon, about to ascend under the management of M. Godard. My companions were M<sup>me</sup> the Countess de S—s, the Count Alexis de Pomereu, and one of his friends.'

The air was calm and the sky pure, the party in high spirits, and without the least thought of danger. 'Not one of us,' says M. Matzoeff, 'felt any acceleration in the beating of his heart;' and for a long time they enjoyed the panoramic view of the great city beneath, which inspired the sentiment: 'Viewing human things from such a height, one feels that life is more insignificant and nature greater; the instinct of preservation recalling to the earth, but still more powerful the attraction towards the sky.' These contemplations were interrupted by the lady, who, in sportive humour, amused herself by causing the car to 'oscillate capriciously' with sudden shocks, and 'at times leaning over the edge, defying the abyss, and seriously compromising our equilibrium. At last, yielding to the respectful injunctions of the party, she consented to relinquish her experiments.' After this they dined 'as comfortably as in one of the saloons of the Frères-Provençaux,' and drank healths, and talked of the possibility of directing balloons until it was time to descend. As they approached the earth, the guide-rope, 150 metres long, was lowered, and 'seized by some labourers, who drew us without a shock to the middle of their field near the village of Bussy-le-Long,' distant about sixty-six miles from Paris—the voyage having occupied three hours and a half.

The peasants next towed the balloon to Soissons, a league from Bussy, where they arrived at half-past eleven. The soldiers on guard at the gate were not a little surprised by a request for accommodation for the balloon, which, however, was granted by the commandant. 'I ran back,' says M. Matzoeff, 'to my companions, who had remained in the car. I seized

the cord which hung in front of our machine, and the captive balloon entered triumphantly into Soissons over the fortifications. The population slept; but the noise we made in hooking some of the chimneys must have astonished the good Soissonnais, little accustomed to such visits. The balloon, once secured in the Place d'Armes, and placed in charge of M. Godard, junior, the damage to the chimneys paid for at small cost, we took up our quarters in a hotel, gladly enjoying the solidity of the earth and the liberty of our movements.'

M. Godard had determined on making another ascent, but with diminished numbers, so as to give full play to the elevating power of the balloon; and while one-half of the travellers were devising means to return to Paris, the others prepared for a night ascent, which, as M. Matzoeff writes, 'was not devoid of a certain solemnity. We could not dissemble its danger. It will be understood, in fact, that in a long journey all the rigging of a frail machine, in which the weight and the substance have to be strictly economised, undergoes a notable deterioration, and requires to be carefully readjusted and strengthened before fresh service. At the same time the gas, having become rarer and diminished in volume, escapes insensibly by the distended seams and through the silk, on which the varnish is more or less damaged. . . . Nevertheless, seduced by the sole idea of accomplishing something yet unattempted, and reassured by the composure and good-humour of the two aeronauts, I shook hands with my companions, laid in some provisions, and gaily bestrode the clouds at seven minutes past three to go to meet the sun.'

'The panorama was magnificent towards the south; the north, on the contrary, was covered with haze. At times there came an insupportable heat; at others a cold from which I could scarcely defend myself under my furs, while the sun scorched our faces. In the same way, when among the ice you approach a fire the cold and the heat make themselves felt simultaneously in all their intensity. The thermometer, which at our departure stood at ten degrees (centigrade) above zero, fell to one degree below, then went up again to six degrees above, although we were continually ascending. The aneroid ceased to operate at forty minutes past three. I then examined my compass, and found it completely motionless; believing it to be broken, I handed it to M. Godard, who, however, was surprised to find it uninjured. The cause of the inaction of this instrument will probably be explained by science. I offer no conjecture, and state only, that arrived at the apogee of our second ascent—namely, 3760 metres—our two compasses were insensible; and that, on our return to the earth, they had recovered their action, without its having occurred to us to determine at what height their movement ceased.'

Although at a hundred leagues' distance, the chain of the Alps was distinctly visible, their peaks gleaming in the sunlight. M. Matzoeff says that the configuration of these mountains is familiar to him, and that he clearly recognised the form of Mont Blanc—a remarkable proof of the extraordinary remoteness at which objects can be seen from a great height.

Suddenly a number of rapid detonations were heard, followed by a copious discharge of gas in the form of gray vapour from the lower part of the balloon, threatening a double danger. 'Seated,' says the author, 'in a corner of the car, I watched all M. Godard's movements, and scrutinised in anxious silence his look fixed on the valve; and reading there nothing reassuring, I comprehended that we had to contend with an unknown enemy, revealed to us by the discharge of gas, which threatened to suffocate us. The aeronaut, notwithstanding his courage and experience, hesitated alike on the nature of the peril and on the means of combating it: I then considered myself as lost. . . . At length M. Godard, overcoming his hesi-

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tation, pulled the cord of the valve hastily: immediately the gas ceased to envelop us—we were saved. . . .

'The anxieties I had undergone were forgotten as soon as I saw the interior of the balloon again become transparent. The sun rose higher, the heat gradually increased, the gas dilated, and under this natural action the balloon ascended. The thermometer marked seven degrees above zero, and then fell to the same temperature as at our departure from Soissons two and a half hours before. At length, at thirty-seven minutes after five the balloon ceased to mount, remained stationary a few moments, and began to descend of itself. We traversed a cloud; it was an odd sensation, known by those who have climbed high mountains. We were wet to the skin, although there was no rain.'

The balloon descended in a wheat-field at a quarter past six, near to the village of Cliron, and about two leagues from Mézières, and eighty-six miles from Soissons. M. Godard, desirous of gratifying the inhabitants of Mézières with a sight of the balloon, engaged a party of labourers to tow it to the town—a task of much difficulty, as the road, bordered by trees, was scarcely wide enough to admit the passage of the huge machine. It had been determined to empty the balloon and return to Paris, but on inquiry it was found that the nearest railway station was at Epernay, thirty leagues off; and the prospect of so tedious a journey led M. Godard to propose continuing the balloon voyage into Belgium, where they might more readily find prompt means of return to Paris.

No sooner said than done. Here M. Matzneff continues: 'Although the weather was beautiful, the intensity of the wind would necessarily increase with the elevation of the sun above the horizon, and M. Godard apprehended that we should have considerable difficulty in effecting our third descent; but we were still under the empire of enthusiasm. We started, after receiving a memorandum from the mayor of Cliron, certifying our visit to his commune and the hour of our departure: it was then ten minutes past eight. We rose very rapidly; the thermometer shewed seventeen degrees above zero. We again saw the Alps, less brilliant than at the rising of the sun. All at once a curtain of clouds hid the earth, and we travelled at a venture, not knowing whither the wind was carrying us. In fact, in spite of the assurances we had received from M. le Maire, whose atmospheric appreciations were somewhat defective, we were sailing direct for Prussia. While we looked down from our winged observatory on the clouds moving with the same rapidity as ourselves, we had a very curious effect of mirage. Between the azure and the clouds we saw a balloon which followed us: it had the same form and proportions as our own, of which it was the vivid and airy reflection. A blast of wind, dispersing the clouds, made the vision disappear, and bore us across the Belgian frontier.

'Our charmed sight embraced at the same time the three adjoining countries—Prussia, France, and Belgium. We gazed with avidity on a panorama without a frame, and our looks lingered on the picturesque spots which presented themselves as we passed. Along the rivers, upon the heights we remarked numerous towns, varying with their gray tints the continuous green of the landscape. Long lines, straight or broken, represent the roads and rivers, so multiplied in this rich and cultivated country. We could follow distinctly the course of the Meuse, and distinguish the city and bridge of Namur, but soon the perspective grew confused, presenting only vague lines and forms without precision. The Alps with toothed summits reappeared at our right; and at the same moment we saw the Vosges, which seemed to continue the icy mountain-chain. Still we rose. The progressive expansion of the gas produced by the diminution of atmospheric pressure and by its dilatation under the intensity of the solar rays, impelled us upwards. Far from being

disquieted at this vertical flight, we aided it as much as possible by throwing out ballast.'

Again the alarming detonations of the earlier morning were heard, causing the same painful anxiety; it was found, however, that they were produced by the sudden swelling outwards of the sides of the balloon against the net after having been pressed inwards by flaws of wind. At this time—forty minutes past nine—the greatest elevation was reached—6340 metres (20800)—and the thermometer stood at three degrees below zero.

'M. Godard told me,' resumes the narrator, 'that in none of his ascents had he ever experienced anything similar to that which we then felt: he and his brother were seized with a painful sickness. Under the weight of this oppression we became, as it were, deaf, and this condition was rendered more sensible by the absolute silence which surrounded us. I was aware of my own deafness, as I could no longer hear my voice or that of my companions, while a loud buzzing in the ears inconvenienced me greatly. We wished again to consult the compass; but, as on the former occasion, it was inactive. We saw the plains of Belgium traced with lines of railway and highway that seemed confusedly interlaced. Over this point we remained stationary for half an hour: my pulse beat ninety-eight to the minute; our throats were dry, breathing difficult, and an excessive drowsiness weighed us down, and we were obliged frequently to stand up to avoid giving way to it. M. Godard, junior, wrapped himself up, and lying down at the bottom of the car, slept as tranquilly as if he had been in his bed. The elder wished to do the same, and to leave me in charge of the balloon, with instructions to wake him only when it should begin to descend. I energetically opposed this proof of confidence, feeling myself incapable of undertaking such a responsibility, and replacing even for a moment two men, one of whom was then performing his thirty-fourth, the other his eighty-fifth aerial voyage. We therefore mutually resolved to keep each other awake.

'Towards ten o'clock the balloon began to descend rapidly, and then stopped at a height of 1000 metres—about the level of the clouds.' By an escape of gas a farther descent was effected, and preparations were made for the final stage. 'For the first time we lost our presence of mind; we forgot the benches fitted to our car: relieved of their weight the balloon would have carried us farther, and to a favourable ground. We were forced, in spite of ourselves, to yield to the falling movement, which we checked as much as possible. M. Godard the younger began to slack away the grappling-iron; but instead of uncoiling gradually, it escaped, and fell suddenly to the extent of forty metres, giving us a terrible shock. The other cord of 150 metres, which suffices generally, by its friction against the asperities of the soil, to diminish the horizontal motion and neutralise the effect of the wind, was almost useless, for the peasants who came running after us, understanding neither French nor German, were afraid to seize the cord and drag us downwards. Sometimes we neared the earth, at others we rose again, the danger augmenting at each shock, which became more and more violent. My instruments fell out one after another: we approached a narrow gorge, and I foresaw the tearing of the balloon, and its downfall with ourselves on the points of the rocks beneath us.

"M. de Matzneff, descend if you will," said M. Godard with a troubled voice—we were at a height of about thirty metres—"make yourself fast in the same way as I, and let us slide down the cord, if you can count upon your strength."

'The labourers at last had laid hold of the rope, comprehending that we wished to stop the balloon. I executed step by step the instructions of my guide, and calling to mind all my notions of gymnastics, suc-

ceeded in reaching the earth without accident. The rustics questioned us all at once in their Flemish idiom, and we tried to make them aware of the urgency of the service we required of them. The car in which M. Godard, junior, still remained was to be brought down: relieved of our weight, it was again ready for a spring; and the ascensional power of the *Eagle* was such that it lifted us from the earth. The burgomaster of the commune of Fosse and his deputy, who arrived at this moment, seized the cords of which the peasants had let go; but all our united efforts were insufficient to retain the balloon, which plunged onwards continually, dragging us after it, notwithstanding that the valve was open. To complete our misfortune, the bottom of the car partly gave way; the position of the young man became terrible; we saw him clinging to the cords, rudely tossed about, and with scarcely any support for his feet. A violent blast tore the balloon suddenly from our grasp, it followed the curve of the narrow pass in which we were entangled, and disappeared. M. Godard uttered a cry of despair: "My brother is lost!" he exclaimed, and ran blindly in pursuit. I endeavoured to follow, but lost his track in the middle of the ravine. Not knowing what direction to take, I stopped breathless at the door of a cabin, waiting with painful anxiety the result of this catastrophe. Fragments of our broken apparatus were brought to me every minute, but no news of my unlucky companions. At length, after an hour's delay, I learned from a pedler passing by that the aeronauts had gained possession of the balloon at about two miles' distance, and were engaged in emptying it. I ran in the direction indicated, and coming up soon with my friends, we exchanged congratulations on the termination of the adventure.

The total distance travelled in six hours and a half of aërostation was 130 leagues, or 340 miles. From Basse Bodeux, where the balloon descended, the party made their way to Spa, whence they found means to return to Paris. M. Matzneff adds to his narrative a table of his observations on the temperature of the different strata of the atmosphere through which he passed in his several ascents. These were previously submitted to the scrutiny of M. Babinet, an eminent member of the Academy of Sciences, and compared with the readings of the instruments taken at the same time in the observatory at Paris. 'I advise you,' writes M. Babinet to the author, 'to publish all your observations, regardless of their concordance with received ideas. The circumstance of a voyage of repeated ascents with the same balloon, and without renewal of the gas, gives them a practical interest hitherto wanting.'

#### A SCOTTISH SHIELING.

A shieling, or shiel, is a small rude hut or cottage, constructed for the accommodation of shepherds during the summer months they reside among the mountains. It is built of turf or rough stones, and generally thatched with broom or straw. It has a door, and a small square opening closed by a board in place of a window. The interior displays the most brilliant ebony hue, and is painted by the hand of no common artist. A chimney and fireplace are luxuries unthought of; the fire is lighted on the floor, and an opening in the roof, at one end of the dwelling, is deemed quite sufficient for the egress of the smoke. If all is quiet without, it generally finds its way; but otherwise, it would be perhaps better to submit to the consequences of a heavy shower outside, than run the risk of having the eyes irritated, and the breathing embarrassed, by the smoke within. In such a place luxury in furniture is not to be looked for, the principal items usually being a heather-bed, a small wooden form, a turf-built sofa by the fire, termed a *shuk*, a little meal-gimel, an iron pot, a tin flagon, one or more wooden dishes called *cups*, and several horn-spoons. The food generally used by the shepherds is what in Scotland is known by the name of *brase*, which is made by pouring

boiling water upon oatmeal, with a little salt, then gently stirring with a spoon, and qualifying with butter or milk, as either may be obtained. The fuel used for boiling the water is either peats or *birns*—the withered stems of heath—and the pot is suspended over the fire by a chain from an iron spike fixed in the wall. Cheese and bread are also partaken of, but chiefly during their long and fatiguing rambles round the mountain-riggins.—*Gardiner's Flora of Forfarshire.*

#### TO MY CANARY IN HIS CAGE.

SING away, ay, sing away,  
Bonnie little bird!  
Sing, with patient soul and gay,  
Though a woodland roundelay  
You have never heard;  
Though your life from youth to age  
Passes in a narrow cage.  
Near the window wild birds fly,  
Trees and flowers are round:  
Fair things everywhere you spy  
Through the glass-pane's mystery—  
Your horizon's bound:  
Nothing hinders your desire  
But a little gilded wire.  
Like a human soul you seem,  
Shut in golden bars;  
Placed amid earth's sunshine-stream,  
Singing to the morning-beam,  
Dreaming 'neath the stars:  
Seeing all life's pleasures clear—  
But they never can come near!  
Never!—Sing, bird-poet mine,  
As most poets do—  
Guessing with an instinct fine  
Of some happiness divine  
Which they never knew:  
Lonely in a prison bright,  
Hymning for the world's delight.  
Yet, my birdie, you're content  
In your tiny cage;  
Not a carol thence is sent  
But for happiness is meant—  
Wisdom sweet and sage!  
Teaching, the true poet's part  
Is to sing with merry heart.  
So, lie down thou peevish pen!  
Eyes, smile off all tears;  
And, my wee bird, sing again;  
I'll translate your song to men  
In these coming years:  
'Hoots'er thy lot's assigned,  
Bear it with a cheerful mind.'

#### HINT ABOUT INKSTANDS.

A safe inkstand, and convenient establishment for writing in each room, in which it is constantly or frequently required, will be more effectual for preventing ink-stains than any receipt will be for getting them out. It is not the *natural*, quiet use of ink, but its *unnatural* locomotion which is generally fatal to floors, dresses, furniture, and carpets. Writing belongs to the stationary department, and no one can run about with its appurtenances without constant risk and occasional damage. These appurtenances are likewise so cheap and commodious now-a-days, and their use so frequent, since the penny-postage, that persons who profit by this great convenience should not begrudge some attention to its requisitions.—*Home Truths.*

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